

### Wheat Marketing Report

Premier Martin has received an exhaustive report on the whole question of wheat marketing from James Stewart and F. W. Riddell, of the Canadian Wheat Board in response to the request made early last March by Mr. Martin who asked the following specific questions upon which the Saskatchewan Government especially desired information and advice:

1. Is it possible for any kind of pool comprising less than the whole of the western wheat crop to market the crop to the same advantage from the producers' point of view as a system of national marketing of the whole crop by a Canada Wheat Board?
2. What advantages to the producer over the present marketing system would there be in any kind of pool which comprises only a portion of the crop?
3. Are such advantages, if any, sufficiently certain to justify producers entering into long-term pooling contracts?
4. To what extent would such long-term contracts provide a safe selling basis for the pool prior to the actual delivery of the wheat.
5. How could a long-term contract pool operating over the whole West be sure of sufficient financial backing to enable it to hold enough wheat off the market in times of glut to ensure reasonable stabilization of prices?
6. Would it be wise from the Producers' point of view to embark on a full scale system of long-term contract pooling at once or to conduct instead one or more large scale experiments of a voluntary character?
7. If your answer to question 6 is favourably to a full scale system of long-term contract pooling operating over the whole West, can you recommend the best means of co-operation on the part of the Government of the Province in order to attain the best results for the producers always having regard to our constitutional limitations?
8. If your answer to question 6 is favourable to large scale experiments of a voluntary character, can you recommend the form such experiment should take in this province, the principles upon which it should operate, the general scheme of operation and also what assistance, if any, is required from the Government of Saskatchewan either by way of legislation or finance?

#### Government Desires Fullest Information.

It was explained by Mr. Martin that it was not intended that the question set forth should in any way be regarded as limiting the report as it was the desire of the Government to procure the very fullest information on all phases of the wheat marketing question, for the two purposes of procuring accurate information of an educational character for the people of the Province generally, and to ascertain what assistance the Government of the Province is capable of rendering in connection with the marketing of grain.

The report gives a brief and lucid outline of conditions under which the farmer markets his grain in Western Canada at the present time, then answers the question in detail, summing up the conclusions arrived at as follows:

#### Voluntary Co-operative Pool.

"In the first place, we believe that the most perfect form of a centralized wheat marketing agency, at the present time, can be created only under the control of a national organization. And, secondly, we believe that in considering any form of wheat marketing pool, involving less than complete national control, one based upon voluntary co-operative effort on the part of the producer, is preferable to one bound by the provisions of a legal contract."

The following are a few extracts from the report:

"Federal control, through such an agency as the Canadian Wheat Board, would give advantages to the producer in the marketing of his wheat crop, that could not be secured in similar degree in any other form of centralized control."

#### Success or Failure Depends on Producers.

"The success or failure, of any form of pool, with or without optional features, depend entirely upon the degree of support to be given by producers. But it is perhaps worth mentioning, that assuming a voluntary pool or a non-minimum contract pool were successfully operated with a comparatively limited patronage, the existence of such an organization might be able to exercise sufficient regulative influence over trade practices to reduce to a minimum any disadvantages which the present system may have developed. That is to say: it might increase the tendency on the part of the trade, which exists even now in a measurable degree, to regard the farmer in the light of a partner in a mutual enterprise. Furthermore, while the amount of wheat to be pooled would be definite under certain forms of pooling organizations, the voluntary pool would afford an opportunity to observe the true popularity of such a scheme."

#### Objections to Contract Pool.

"It is our opinion that producers would do well to consider fully the obligations devolving upon them before entering into contracts at all, covering a period of years. Our reason for this statement is not based on a criticism of the contract idea as one of the methods of operation. If we were dealing with fixed conditions there would be fewer objections to a contract idea as one of the methods of operation. If we were dealing with fixed conditions there would be fewer objections to a contract. The production and marketing of wheat are accompanied by human impulses, the strength and tend of which during a period of five years cannot in our opinion be anticipated and definitely provided for in a specific contract. Consequently, conditions might arise under which either party to the contract would find the provisions thereof onerous, to say the least. This, in turn, would bring into play psychological influences which might easily be sufficient to precipitate the failure of the scheme. In other words: a binding contract for several years during a transition period, and applying to so complicated a matter as wheat marketing, appears to us to be one of the least desirable of steps to be taken with a view to improving marketing conditions. There is nothing that a producer would be required to do under a contract that he cannot do of his own free will. It is much more to producer's interests that they should realize this fact, than that they should sign a contract only to learn that it was a barrier to their real aims."

#### Not Contract that matters but Wheat.

"After all it is not the contract that matters: it is the wheat. Freedom for the farmer, and his good-will, are the essential con-

siderations at all times. He may, without a contract, deliver all of his wheat to the pooling organization. It is more important from the point of view of self-interest—individually or collectively—that farmers should realize that if there be any virtue in pooling they ought to market their wheat through that organization as a necessary duty, rather than as a 'party of the second part', under a contract. It should not be assumed that farmers are lacking in cohesive qualities.

"We would consider that we were assuming grave responsibilities were we to recommend such contracts to producers."

#### Organization specially created for Purpose.

"If a sufficiently widespread demand on the part of the province for voluntary pooling on a large scale existed, and providing the government was desirous of acceding to that demand, the form of organization which we would suggest for such experiment would be one specially created for the purpose, and so constituted and conducted that it would be directly responsible to the farmers patronizing it.

"The general principle of a voluntary pool involve centralized selling initial advances, and equal distribution of proceeds of sales according to grade. The plan of operation would be a voluntary pool where the producer may deliver to the pooling organization without a contract the whole or any portion of his wheat, but where there are no optional marketing channels at the disposal of the patron within the pooling organization, all the wheat would be pooled. The pooling organization would have complete control of the wheat after receipt of documents—such as bills of lading or storage tickets representing the wheat. Arrangements would be made for taking delivery of less than carload lots by means of storage tickets, and for carload lots by consignment. This would apply to wheat handled by any licensed elevator, and might also include cars shipped over the platform. On receipt of bills of lading covering consignments, or of storage tickets covering less than carlots, a uniform advance would be made, basis One Northern in store Fort William. Under this system the Canada Grain Act as at present would render all country elevators and terminal facilities available for the purpose of the scheme. This system would be available to farmers at every shipping point whether a country elevator was located there or not."

#### Financial Arrangements.

"With regard to financing, a pooling arrangement should be an attractive proposition to the banks. In view of the fact that the initial advance would be only a conservative percentage of the value of the wheat pooled, it might reasonably be expected that the banks would favorably consider financing the scheme on its own merits, this being in effect what they severally do now through advances given their clients, the grain companies. If, however, satisfactory arrangements could not be made with banks, the Government might assist by guaranteeing the necessary credits to make the scheme operate at all times. Periods would likely occur, when, in the opinion of the management of the pool, it would be advisable to withhold supplies from the market. At such times credit might be curtailed, and assistance from the Government would, in that event, obviate the necessity of making forced sales at prices which might be regarded by the management as unduly low. In such circumstances the Government no doubt could assist by arranging for an extension of credit. Once delivery of the wheat at terminals commenced, a certain percentage of the wheat, of course, would be converted into cash from time to time, and to that extent necessity for credit would be relieved."

#### Legislature Could Assist.

"The Legislature of Saskatchewan could assist in the matter of legislation by passing such measures as would enable either organization above described to be created. It is also essential that such organization should have the power, if and when necessary, to purchase and sell wheat other than pooled. This should not become a general practice, but occasions would occur when the management of the pool might over-estimate the quantity of any particular grade which they had contracted for delivery within a specified period. In order to comply with such contract, therefore, it would probably find itself compelled to go into the open market and purchase the balance required to complete contracts."

"The advantages of the proposal we have dealt with in this answer are that the adoption of it provides a further marketing agency, and one which can be operated with the least disturbance to existing facilities, and which does not involve the farmer in complications, present or future, that might attach to a contract pool. As previously pointed out, the rest depends upon patronage and service."



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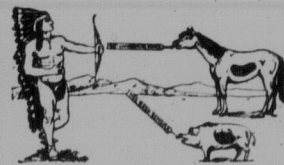
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